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President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 26

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/409)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.20)

The President: I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.20.

Mr. Sharma (India): I have the honour of introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.20 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". The text of the draft resolution has been jointly prepared by members of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) itself, and I hope that it can be adopted by consensus, as in previous years, especially at this juncture, when we constantly seek to imbue our work with that much sought after element, political will, which obviously resides in parliaments.

The report prepared by the Secretary-General (A/55/409) highlights the intensification of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, in several areas of concern to the international community. Apart from describing the actions taken by the IPU to support and complement the work of the United Nations, it "demonstrates the potential for a greater contribution by national parliaments, through IPU, to the work of the United Nations, and to disseminating an understanding of that work and ensuring the requisite follow-up". These sentiments are fully reciprocated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the final declaration entitled "The parliamentary vision of international cooperation on the eve of the third millennium" adopted by consensus at the Conference of the Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, organized by the IPU in cooperation with the United Nations at New York from 30 August to 1 September 2000, pledged the commitment of the speakers and presiding officers to "international cooperation with a stronger United Nations at its core". The Millennium Declaration adopted by our heads of States and Government also identified the need to further strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in various fields, including peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights and democracy and gender issues. We, therefore, fully share the Secretary General's hope that "the increasingly close and productive relationship between the United Nations and the IPU may soon also be recognized through a new, strengthened and formalized relationship between IPU and the General Assembly".

Substantially, the concerns of the United Nations and the IPU are common: equitable economic growth, the achievement of international peace and security, democracy, respect for human rights, sustainable development and social progress. There is an essential similarity in approach, convergence of actions and,

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most importantly, a congruence of the objectives of the two organizations. It is for this reason that the draft resolution in its preambular part, having recalled resolution 54/12 of 27 October, 1999, and having considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/409), notes with appreciation the resolutions adopted and the activities carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union during the past year in support of the United Nations. It furthermore welcomes the unanimous adoption of the Declaration "The parliamentary vision of international cooperation on the eve of the third millennium" at the Conference of the Presiding Officers of National Parliaments and recalls with satisfaction the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which contains the resolve of the Member States to further strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It also recalls the unique inter-State character of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In its operative part, the resolution welcomes the efforts of the IPU to provide for greater parliamentary contribution and enhanced support to the United Nations and calls for further consolidation of cooperation between the two organizations. The second paragraph, as originally drafted, requested the Secretary-General, in the true spirit of transparency and openness characterizing all democracies, to explore ways, in consultation with Member States and the IPU, in which a new and formalized relationship, as recommended by the Secretary-General, might be established between the IPU, the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, and to report thereon to the General Assembly by May next year. However, in order to achieve consensus on the text, it has been decided to change one word in paragraph 2, namely, the word "formalized", which would be replaced by the word "strengthened". In paragraph 3, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on various aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the last paragraph decides to include the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union" in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, given the fact that the draft resolution that I have just introduced has no financial implications for the programme budget, and in view of the resolve of our heads of State and Government expressed at the Millennium Summit, as well as the desire of speakers and presiding officers of national parliaments to strengthen cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations, I wish to propose on behalf of all the sponsors that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following additional countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritania, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus is grateful to the Permanent Representative of India for introducing the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

We also welcome the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and thank him for the coordination of the work between the United Nations and the Union.

The Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the problems of cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. In this context, this past year has been particularly important. The unprecedented number of leaders of national legislative organs that took part in the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which preceded the United Nations Millennium Summit. This remarkable event helped create the important background for fruitful discussion during the Millennium Summit. Both the Conference and the Summit demonstrated to the international community the unanimity of the legislative and executive power of the United Nations Member States on the most important aspects of the international agenda. The heads of both Chambers of the National

Assembly of the Republic of Belarus who took part in the Conference made their contribution to the process by creating this unanimity. I have been instructed by the National Assembly to reassure the Members of the General Assembly that the members of the Parliament of the Republic of Belarus are ready to continue their work in close cooperation with the United Nations in order to implement the final decisions of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments and the Millennium Summit.

The report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (A/55/409) makes it clear that the fields of interaction of both important bodies are constantly broadening. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is becoming a more active partner of the United Nations in all its activities and undertakings and implements many of United Nations initiatives at the level of national parliaments. We believe this to be a very significant aspect of the IPU's work. Strengthening of the United Nations initiatives at the level of national legislative bodies means taking practical steps which provide greater effectiveness for such work. We welcome new elements in this year's resolution related to further improvement of cooperation between the IPU and the General Assembly, as well as the proposal of the Secretary-General concerning formalization of the relationship between two unique forums in the international relations system.

This year is of particular significance for further development of parliamentarianism in Belarus. There were the first ever large-scale elections to the Lower House of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus. The electoral campaign was preceded by enormous work by all Belarusian political institutions. The result of this work was the adoption of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Belarus that accumulated most of the experience of the advanced parliamentary democracies of the world.

The elections were monitored by around 200 independent international observers, representing over 20 countries of the world. Two rounds of elections led to the formation of a new legal body of representative power that will start its work on 21 November.

The new Belarusian Parliament will certainly be an active participant in all activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Republic of Belarus is convinced that interaction and growing cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU will serve the benefit of the people of our States. We see a high meaning and the necessity to continue intensive work in this field and will do our best to encourage its progress.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Let me at the outset thank the Permanent Representative of India for his excellent introduction to the draft resolution before us.

Two major events have taken place here at the United Nations this autumn that have contributed greatly to ensuring closer cooperation between the United Nations and parliamentarians in the years to come. I am referring to the Conference of Presiding Officers of the National Parliaments and the Millennium Summit. We should all heed the clear message that was conveyed by the presiding officers of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) when they called for more active participation of parliamentarians in international cooperation. The Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (A/55/409) shows that this cooperation has been consolidated and diversified during the past year.

National parliaments are comprised of men and women who have been elected precisely for the purpose of representing the people. Parliaments have a legitimate role to play in making the voice of the people heard in international decision-making processes. They can and should give a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. Moreover, increased interaction between national parliaments and multilateral institutions, including the United Nations, could bring even more transparency and accountability to these institutions and enhance their ability to implement policies and programmes that have been agreed. Governments need support in national parliaments to be effective on the international scene.

It is therefore encouraging that the presiding officers so firmly pledged their commitment to contribute to international cooperation in the future. We need to develop better mechanisms for dialogue between the grass-roots level and international organizations. Non-governmental organizations have a role to play in cooperation with the United Nations. But fundamentally the world needs a United Nations where citizens feel that they are genuinely represented

in their political diversity. The United Nations must have a parliamentary dimension.

The Nordic countries have chosen to include parliamentarians representing different parties in their delegations to the General Assembly and to special conferences. I would recommend this as a general model, as one element in building a parliamentary dimension. The United Nations would also benefit from drawing more heavily on the political expertise of these parliamentarians in connection with the General Assembly and other meetings.

In the Millennium Declaration the Member States resolved to further strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This accentuates the need to give the IPU a new and formalized status *vis-à-vis* the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs which is commensurate with its current membership and activities. The United Nations should not consider the Inter-Parliamentary Union as a non-governmental organization.

In this context, we appreciate the views of the Secretary-General as expressed in paragraph 64 of his report. We therefore strongly support the draft resolution before us, particularly the request to the Secretary-General to explore ways in which a new and formalized relationship may be established, and to report back to the General Assembly when it resumes session in May 2001. As a co-sponsor, Norway is confident that the General Assembly will adopt the resolution by consensus.

Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine): It is a special pleasure for me, who once was honoured to be the President of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of this highly authoritative post. I am convinced that under your skilful guidance and leadership, the Assembly will be able to achieve important results. My delegation wishes you every success in this endeavour.

I am especially gratified to participate in this debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Having become a member of the IPU, Ukraine has co-sponsored the draft resolution under this agenda item in the strong conviction that the two organizations have a joint mission to make prosperity, peace and democracy the real universal values of the next century. My delegation is grateful to the Permanent Representative of India for his introduction of the draft resolution, of which Ukraine is a sponsor and which I hope will be adopted by consensus.

In carrying out its mandate the IPU has clearly demonstrated that it shares the lofty goals of the United Nations. The IPU helps in a significant way to intensify the dialogue among societies and nations on the pressing issues of international peace and security, human rights, the environment and economic and social development, thereby fully contributing to the objectives of the United Nations.

We are convinced that the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which was held recently in New York in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly, has become a milestone in the history of cooperation between our two organizations and has contributed significantly to shaping awareness among elected members of national parliaments of the global challenges the United Nations is facing at the dawn of the third millennium. It has also provided an opportunity to enhance public understanding of the activities of the United Nations and to gain stronger support for the Organization.

It would not be an overstatement to say that joining the IPU had particular significance for Ukraine. Having embarked on the road to true democratic transformation of its society, the intensive contacts and continuous exchange of experiences among parliamentarians of all countries within the framework of the IPU is of major importance to us. A lot has been achieved in a short time to ensure that the process of reform in the political and economic spheres taking place in my country gains momentum and becomes irreversible. The rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution have become the guiding principles of political reality. Presidential and parliamentary elections have been conducted in a democratic fashion. Civil peace and public accord have been maintained, thereby strengthening the foundations of civil society.

Last February's formation of a democratic majority in the Ukrainian Parliament contributed significantly to an atmosphere of political stability in the country, thus creating a favourable environment for enhancing the effectiveness of the law-making process. Thereafter, it became possible to proceed speedily to adopt laws, of crucial importance for the strengthening of our independent statehood, that had previously been unreasonably delayed. In particular, taxation, civil and

administrative codes have been successfully adopted. The passing of the land code was an event whose importance can hardly be overestimated. The agrarian reform, which is based on the principles of private property, provides that industrious Ukrainian peasants will become real owners of their land.

In the coming century, the observance of the principles of human rights, the rights of national minorities and the realization of social justice will dominate people's lives. Without them there will be no civility in societies; there will be no peace. Moreover, they will drive economic and social progress. During the years since its independence, Ukraine — a multi-ethnic country with over 130 ethnic minorities — successfully managed to avoid inter-ethnic conflicts and to preserve peace and internal stability. That was made possible due to the persistent efforts of the Government and Parliament of Ukraine to pursue a policy based on full respect for the rights of national minorities through the support of detailed national legislation consistent with international norms and standards in the field of national minority rights. This has received high praise from the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Let me also recall the decision of the President of Ukraine to put forth the candidacy of Ukraine's former Foreign Minister, Mr. Borys Tarasyuk, for the post of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. We hope his candidacy will enjoy overwhelming support during the elections that will be held shortly, at the next OSCE ministerial meeting in Vienna.

In conclusion, Ukraine would like to reiterate its satisfaction at seeing stronger cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. It is our hope that this cooperation will be further enhanced in the years to come. For its part, Ukraine will spare no effort to contribute to the achievement of that important goal.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is of long standing. In fact, in 1947 the IPU was among the first organizations to obtain general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. As the Ambassador of India pointed out in his excellent introduction of the draft resolution before us today, that privileged relationship gained renewed strength in 1996 when the cooperation agreement between the IPU and the United Nations was concluded.

This item was first inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. Since that time, this item has annually been the subject of a plenary debate during consideration of the relevant draft resolutions. This illustrates the importance attached by Member States to the draft resolutions, as does their adoption by consensus every year.

The European Union is pleased at recent developments aimed at involving our parliaments even more closely in the activities of the United Nations. In recent months, the international community has solemnly and at the highest level reaffirmed its wish to see the role of parliaments in international life more clearly confirmed. That desire was clearly expressed by the elected officials of the people themselves during the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, organized by the IPU at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September 2001.

That same message was forcefully recalled in the Millennium Declaration adopted on 8 September 2000. On that occasion, heads of State or Government decided

> "To strengthen further cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in various fields, including peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights and democracy and gender issues." (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*)

In the spirit of those messages, delivered by the highest authorities of our countries, the European Union seeks full recognition of the contribution of parliamentary diplomacy to the attainment of the purposes of the United Nations.

The unanimous adoption by presiding officers of national parliaments of a declaration entitled "The Parliamentary vision of international cooperation on the eve of the third millennium" was surely one of the

high points of the Millennium Assembly. It confirmed the international role that national parliaments can play in bringing peoples closer together and thus in building a more peaceful, more democratic and more prosperous world. It confirms for the future that the voice of parliamentarians can and must be heard within the comity of nations. The European Union has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/55/L.20 because it is convinced that it will let the voices of parliamentarians from all countries be heard more clearly.

By calling for a new and strengthened relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the General Assembly will show its commitment to opening the United Nations up to the peoples themselves, to public opinion and to international civil society. That effort at openness is in line with the most recent initiatives that the Secretary-General has taken throughout the Millennium Assembly. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the European Union, to welcome those initiatives. Ultimately, this effort should yield an imaginative, bold collective effort to let the oldest of international political institutions take its rightful place within the United Nations.

Mr. Schloten (Germany): It is indeed an important event for me, as Chairman of the Group of Twelve Plus in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), encompassing 43 member countries and two parliamentary assemblies, to address this audience in order to underline the importance of new cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This important issue has been dealt with by the Assembly in previous years. Representatives of many countries have pointed out that parliamentarians worldwide and in the IPU have a stronger role to play than ever before.

Many a presiding officer or parliamentarian present at the millennium Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, held recently in New York, was particularly pleased to listen to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, when they addressed that conference. When the Secretary-General said that no group of leaders was better placed to express the interests of their citizens in a global era than heads of parliaments, who represent the peoples of the world, he strongly underlined the increasing weight of parliaments in today's globalized world.

The Secretary-General's view that the voice of parliaments must be heard and that, if democracy is to thrive at the global level, the peoples of the world must rise above their differences and unite to pursue the common interests of all humankind needs our full support. His observation that a parliamentary vision of international relations is needed more than ever before means that the United Nations needs a parliamentary dimension, a parliamentary element and parliamentary support for all its efforts. That parliamentary dimension can and must be provided by the only worldwide international parliamentary organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was founded in 1889.

The address of the President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly to the Conference of Presiding Officers underlined the fact that the IPU and the United Nations now have to find new ways to work together beyond mere cooperation; they must strive for strong bonds of mutual interaction on common ground.

The fourth part of the Declaration unanimously adopted by the presiding officers of parliaments, entitled "The parliamentary vision of international cooperation on the eve of the third millennium", explicitly deals with the parliamentary dimension of international cooperation. All parliaments of the world and their organization, the IPU, are called upon to provide a parliamentary dimension for international cooperation. This call should be understood not only as a challenge to implement a programme. It must go much further: it has to be understood as a continuous effort to bring together the United Nations and the IPU. That means providing the United Nations with a specific parliamentary body with the task of supporting the United Nations in implementing democracy and States based on the rule of law on a worldwide scale, and in making the implementation of programmes more feasible.

Closer cooperation and mutual interaction on the part of the two international bodies, the IPU and the United Nations, would be far more apt and capable in terms of strengthening mechanisms for democratic control and legitimization of the United Nations than either organization trying to achieve that goal on its own. If, in that context, the IPU can act as the parliamentary dimension or arm of the United Nations, the operational ability of the United Nations in today's world would stand on even more solid ground.

With regard to today's meeting of the General Assembly, the Group of Twelve Plus in the IPU has thoroughly discussed the context of the draft resolution on which a decision will be taken here. All members were strongly in favour of requesting the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States and with the IPU, to explore ways in which a new and strengthened relationship might be established between the IPU and the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs.

We are ready and willing to make our contribution regarding what such a relationship should look like. I am aware that the IPU will not be the "parliament of the United Nations". Although I would be in favour of having a parliamentary assembly of the United Nations, like the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I realize that political and legal constraints would impede such a vision. However, we have to be clear about how such a parliamentary dimension or component could be accepted by the United Nations and about how it could function. I wish to avoid speaking of two independent world organizations existing side by side.

Therefore, we should try to bring the United Nations and the IPU closer together, which would mean scheduling joint conferences, bringing parliamentarians, General Assembly members and representatives of the United Nations together in a permanent dialogue through meetings and sessions at the United Nations in order continuously to exchange the views needed to strengthen democracy, States based on the rule of law and common values all over the world.

Recent developments have clearly shown that the contribution of parliaments in working together with the United Nations needs to be improved and can be reinforced. As the Secretary-General has said, the voice of parliamentarians should be heard worldwide. We must arrive at the conviction that the goals we are striving for can be better achieved when the IPU and the United Nations continuously work hand in hand. The 43 countries members of the Twelve Plus Group — the democracies based upon the rule of law — offer their good services to help create stability in an increasingly complicated world.

I sincerely invite all members present to vote in favour of the draft resolution. A positive vote would be a first step for deeper and closer cooperation linking the two organizations to create one system for the good of the people.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The annual consideration by the General Assembly of the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union testifies to the very special interest that the international community accords to the two organizations, which collaborate in various areas of activity, within the agreed framework of a mutually advantageous partnership.

Before continuing with my statement, I should like to pay tribute to and welcome my friend, President Udovenko, parliamentarian from Ukraine, and, above all, to congratulate him for his inspiring statement.

I am particularly pleased to note the holding, from 30 August to 1 September 2000, of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, held in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly. By holding that Conference at United Nations Headquarters so as to express to the United Nations the significant support that national assemblies now intend to give to international cooperation, the Inter-Parliamentary Union performed a historic act, taking a step towards a new partnership. This new partnership — for such it is — is aimed at key, sensitive areas of international relations, such as peace and security, economic and social development and the promotion of human rights and human solidarity worldwide.

Speaking in the debate at that historic Conference, Mr. Cheikh Abdoul Khadre Cissokho, President of the National Assembly of Senegal, stated, with great relevance:

> "Parliaments are the authentic voice of peoples because they issue from peoples, as well as being the expression of sovereign will. A global parliament could make a decisive contribution to the balance of the planet, the firm establishment of peace, economic and social progress and the primacy of the human person for the benefit of the Governments represented in the community of nations."

My delegation believes that such objectives must today constitute the bedrock on which cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union should rest. The priority objectives which the United Nations and the Inter-

Parliamentary Union must address today include the need to foster the development of poor countries, with the two organizations always working together to ensure that globalization, which has become an inevitable fact, is fair and able to respond appropriately to the aspirations and interests of our peoples.

During its October 1999 session in Berlin, the Inter-Parliamentary Council debated the need for a detailed review of the international financial structures and called for special initiatives to be undertaken to help the countries of the South, so as to take account of the concerns of the great part of humankind that does not enjoy the benefits of globalization.

The report of the Secretary-General also allows us to measure the scope and diversity of the cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. Thus, during the past year the Inter-Parliamentary Union has continued to consider issues relating to disarmament, peace and international security, the dialogue between civilizations and cultures, the question of the Middle East, economic and social development, the environment, democracy, good governance and equality between men and women.

In the field of disarmament and peace, my country has noted with satisfaction that at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Amman in April and May 2000, the Inter-Parliamentary Union reaffirmed its support for the disarmament efforts of the United Nations by asking the member parliaments to encourage all countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines. At that Conference, the Inter-Parliamentary Union welcomed the proclamation by the General Assembly of 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations, and decided to make a contribution to the success of this commendable initiative.

On the question of the Middle East, I, personally, in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should like to testify to the remarkable participation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the Hanoi meeting in January 2000, during which the Union reaffirmed its support for the peace process through dialogue among the parliamentary delegations of the Asian region. In February 1999 in Rome, the Inter-Parliamentary Union also made a remarkable contribution to the conference to promote the Bethlehem 2000 project, launched by the Palestinian Authority and supported by the Committee.

This list, which is not exhaustive, not only demonstrates the vigour of the cooperation that exists between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, but illustrates how their activities converge and how the purposes and aims of the two organizations are perfectly compatible.

I should like to conclude by stressing that in order to function as smoothly as possible, our world needs governments and parliaments that are united around common values and shared ideals to work together for a single cause — that of the primacy of the human person, of law, of justice and of economic, social and cultural progress. That is the full meaning of the beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and that is also why my delegation supports the draft resolution which my friend, the Ambassador of India, eloquently introduced, and hopes that it will obtain general support.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): It is a privilege for the Indonesian delegation to speak on the agenda item before us. Before proceeding further, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to convey to representatives the importance that we attach to enhanced cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations, which, in our view, should become an important norm in the new millennium. Such cooperation is essential for an effective, vibrant and reformed United Nations that is responsive to the concerns and interests of the vast majority of its Member States, the developing countries.

The Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, held in New York in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, with the participation of 150 presiding officers from 138 countries and 1,000 delegates, was a significant event in increasing parliamentary contribution to international relations in general and to the promotion of the Organization's objectives in particular. It also served the dual purpose of generating greater understanding of the purposes and principles of the United Nations by the parliamentarians while allowing the United Nations to hear the views of parliamentarians on substantive issues considered by the Member States. It gives us great pleasure to note that Indonesian parliamentarians, led by the Speaker of

Parliament, Mr. Akbar Tandjung, also took part in the Conference and made substantial contributions.

The convening of the one hundred and fourth Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference in Jakarta last month was another important milestone in the sustained efforts of the Union to make substantive contributions in furthering international cooperation. In adopting a series of resolutions on issues of global concern and interest, it called for the maintenance of constitutional democracy as an essential prerequisite to ensure human rights; the participation of all sectors of society, including women and minorities and other vulnerable segments, in democratic processes; renewed commitment to dialogue and negotiations in the settlement of internal disputes and divisions; and the promotion of a culture of democracy, good governance and democratic rights of citizens.

In the economic sphere, the Conference called on both developed and developing nations to pursue development with a human face and to launch new approaches to sustainable development in the context of globalization in order to ensure economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Our delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to express our gratitude to the parliamentary delegations that attended the Conference and made it a success.

It is in the face of these hard realities that cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union has become imperative. In this context, it is gratifying to note from the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/55/409 that during the past year, the two organizations undertook mutually reinforcing actions on various issues. Specific areas have been identified in the report, especially on cooperation for the promotion of peace and security, democracy and good governance, and social and economic development. These constitute the foundations for ensuring the security of all States; for the settlement of disputes and conflicts by peaceful means; and for creating an equitable international economic system that would lead to the eradication of hunger, poverty, illiteracy and disease.

Development as a continuing process is an essential prerequisite for peace. Both these objectives must be pursued together. It is the primary responsibility of the international community to adopt urgent and resolute actions in overcoming these age-old scourges of humanity.

Democracy has become a global movement. There is universal recognition that a democratic system of governance ensures the liberties of the people as well as transparency and accountability in decision-making processes, and seeks lasting solutions to political, economic and social problems. Citizens of these countries now have an opportunity to choose their own destiny. However, they need time to develop and gain maturity. In a complex and uncertain era of interdependence and globalization, the challenge to these States is how to consolidate their democratic achievements and expedite their socio-economic progress in the nation-State system, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

In this context, the role of the United Nations in assisting these new democracies will be of great importance. The Organization should continue to discuss new ideas and approaches concerning the future promotion of the democratic ideals put forward by these States, the academic community and civil society.

We in Indonesia, imbued by a desire to realize the universal goals of common peace and generalized prosperity and to promote an international cooperation that is just and equitable, pledge to make our contribution, through active participation in the joint efforts of both the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to make this world a better place, so that peoples can live in harmony. We also reaffirm our commitment to coordinate the positions of these two distinguished but distinct organizations on issues relating to peace and security, and development and poverty eradication. In this way, we can make ourselves heard as a single voice, with the courage and perseverance needed for a major transformation of relations among nations.

It is in this spirit that Indonesia has joined other Member States in co-sponsoring the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", as contained in document A/55/L.20.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Burkina Faso has the honour of taking the floor on the item "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". In

this regard, we would like to recall Assembly resolution 54/1 of 27 October 1999, in which note was taken, with satisfaction, of the resolutions adopted and the activities carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in support of the activities of the United Nations in various fields of importance to international life.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the global organization of the parliaments of sovereign States. Created in 1889, it is the ideal forum for inter-parliamentary dialogue at the global level. The IPU's activities support peace and cooperation among peoples and the strengthening of representative democracy. To this end, the IPU supports contacts, coordination and the exchange of experiences between the parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries; it examines questions of international interest and adopts declarations regarding them in order to urge parliaments and parliamentarians to take action; and it contributes to greater awareness of the functioning of representative institutions, as well as to strengthening and developing their means of taking action.

At the dawning of the third millennium, all civilized nations have fully recognized that representative democracy and good governance are essential for the realization of development, peace and the emancipation of peoples. This principle has produced a great wave of democratization on all continents. No country can avoid this movement, and those that try to resist it only delay the inevitable outcome imposed by the dynamics of global civilization. Thus, the institution of parliament is playing a more and more significant role within societies and in relation to the other State and republican institutions. The institution of parliament has become the guarantor of democracy and human rights, the symbol of the nation and its unity, the voice of the general and national interest.

On the international level, parliamentary diplomacy has taken root and allows our various parliaments to better discuss and work to create democratic conditions to support social peace, security, development and international cooperation. The IPU is the institutional expression of inter-parliamentary cooperation. Although a rather venerable institution, the IPU is also one of the innovative institutions of international life.

Of course Burkina Faso has not resisted this wave of democratic renewal. By means of the current institutions of the fourth Republic, it enjoys a relatively young democracy that is based on the Constitution adopted by referendum on 2 June 1991. Our democratic process is thus in its tenth year and on its second legislature.

For the young Parliament of Burkina Faso, the IPU is a source of information, exchanges and support. Our Parliament systematically participates in all the meetings of the IPU so as to strengthen its capacities and share its experiences. Given this commitment, Burkina Faso has been chosen to host the 106th IPU Conference, which will be held in Ouagadougou from 9 to 15 September 2001. The Conference is the principal statutory entity of the IPU, in whose name it establishes global positions and orientations. The recent Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments — which was held here in New York from 30 August to 1 September 2000, as a prelude to the Millennium Assembly — brought together some 150 presiding officers of parliaments and close to 1,000 delegates; Burkina Faso was chosen as its general Rapporteur. This bears witness to the privileged role our country plays within the IPU in supporting that institution and in promoting the consolidation of the democratic process throughout the world.

As regards cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is the subject of today's discussion, Burkina Faso gives its full support to the draft resolution that is before the Assembly, and of which Burkina Faso is one of the sponsors. My delegation clearly has a great interest in the maintenance and expansion of this cooperation. The report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", contained in document A/55/409, sets out the possible scope of this cooperation and the range of areas in which it might take place. Moreover, the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has already been established. In November 1995 the General Assembly adopted a resolution expressing its desire to strengthen cooperation with the IPU and to establish a new and suitable framework for this cooperation. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to reach an agreement to this end. That agreement, signed on 24 July 1996 at United Nations Headquarters, was concerned with several important aspects of international life, including, inter alia, peace and security, economic and social development,

international law and human rights, democracy, governance and gender issues.

Generally speaking, it is parliaments that implement international law on the domestic level. Specifically, in relation to the United Nations, this implementation involves the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations and the ratification of, and other forms of adherence to, United Nations treaties and conventions. It is therefore important that there be expanded cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU — one of which is the major source of international law and the other of which is the institution by which international law is adopted as domestic law.

All these considerations bear eloquent witness to the helpful and irreplaceable role that parliaments and parliamentarians play in international relations. Given this interaction and this relationship, it is imperative that the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU be vigorously strengthened. In our opinion, the best means of doing this would be to further formalize this cooperation by following what has been done with several other organizations and conferring on the IPU a definite status.

This is what Burkina Faso would like to see. We therefore ask the Assembly to adopt by consensus the draft resolution that is before us, which my friend Ambassador Ling so brilliantly introduced.

Mr. Bulkachuwa (Nigeria): Nigeria is happy to co-sponsor the draft resolution being coordinated by India.

We attach great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as our country has only recently returned to democratic governance after many years of military dictatorship. It is a well-known fact that the first victim of any forcible change of government is the legislative branch, as the peoples' elected representatives are disbanded by the usurpers of power following any such illegal change of government.

Consequently, the legislative branch of any emergent democracy is invariably the least exposed to the processes of governance and, thus, the one with the weakest institutional capacity and memory. It is therefore important that we adopt measures at the national, subregional, regional and even global levels to strengthen and consolidate the activities of this important branch of government, which, along with the executive and judicial branches, forms the tripod on which modern representative democracies stand.

It is encouraging to note that cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is increasingly being deepened and widened in scope and content, despite its relatively recent inclusion on our agenda. It is particularly heartening to realize that the Inter-Parliamentary Union itself has carried out numerous activities in support of the United Nations, notably, in the fields of peace and security, economic and social development, international humanitarian law and human rights, democracy and gender issues, and so forth.

Nigeria is keen to see a further development of this mutually beneficial relationship between the United Nations and the IPU. The institution-building programmes of the IPU have been beneficial to a number of African countries in the past. As democracy is being consolidated on the continent, we trust that these, as well as other programmes designed specifically for emergent democracies in Africa, will be embarked upon within the cooperative framework of the IPU and the United Nations.

It would be foolhardy to be complacent about the success of democracy in countries that have recently embraced that system of governance. Often, the robust discussions and alternative views and voices that are inevitable parts of the democratic process can be mistaken for disagreement and dispute, leading to frustration in the polity. In no other area is this misconception more likely than in the area of law-making, an area with clearly defined responsibilities for both the legislative and the executive branches. It is therefore important that the role of functionaries and officials in the two areas be harmonized, both at the governmental and party levels. The development of programmes under the United Nations-IPU cooperative framework for African parliaments, including members of opposition parties is therefore most welcome.

It is the expectation of the Nigerian delegation that this programme of cooperation and institution-building will continue to be strengthened for the benefit of the African peoples, many of whose legitimate yearnings and aspirations are yet to be met. Although this might be due to the resource constraints faced by individual African countries, in many cases it

is also due to the absence of representative government or, even where this exists, because of a misunderstanding of the respective roles of the various arms of government.

As we commend the IPU's commitment to assisting the United Nations in bringing a parliamentary dimension to its work, we urge that a rigorous assessment of the areas of priority be made, given the constraints imposed by resources. In this regard, democracy and development, and particularly the promotion of good governance, transparency and accountability, should be given attention. Priority attention must equally be given to the economic development of emergent democracies, including through attention to debt cancellation, poverty eradication and the eradication of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as other deadly diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis. National parliaments must also assist the United Nations in giving speedy consideration and approval, where necessary, to all measures aimed at conflict management and resolution. Robust legislative action is required at the national level to meet these challenges and to translate international agreements into appropriate laws.

Finally, I wish, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, to commend all those involved in the forging of the multifaceted relationship between the United Nations and its programmes, the specialized agencies and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Government and the people of Nigeria are ready to play their part to further the realization of the objectives of this relationship.

Mr. Uddin (Bangladesh): Bangladesh welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 26, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". We very much appreciate the role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in adopting resolutions and carrying out activities in support of United Nations actions in the field of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, democracy, governance and gender issues.

Bangladesh, along with many other democratic countries, took part in the recently held Millennium Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments in New York and adopted by consensus "The parliamentary vision for international cooperation at the dawn of the third millennium".

We therefore strongly believe in the ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter and once again call upon Member States to work together to address the main challenges facing the world community: the achievement of international peace and security, democracy, respect for human rights, sustainable development and the ensuing social progress. We also affirm the principles of the Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by IPU and pledge to work towards the establishment of a culture of democracy.

As a member of the National Parliament, I can firmly state that Bangladesh is committed to democracy and will do whatever is required to uphold democracy and democratic principles. I also take this opportunity to recall with pride and respect the sacrifices made by millions of my countrymen in 1971 to establish the rule of democracy. On this point, I wish to quote from the address of the Speaker of our National Parliament made at the millennium Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments. He said:

> "We may be the representatives of least developed countries, but we are not representing the least developed democracies and therefore we are willing and eager to assert our economic independence and harness the advantages of a globalized world."

Bangladesh welcomes the efforts of IPU in encouraging parliamentary action in support of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Summit for Social Development and their subsequent follow-ups. We also appreciate IPU's role in organizing, on 7 June 2000, a tripartite consultation of Governments, parliaments and international organizations on the theme "Democracy through partnership between men and women". IPU consultations are indeed quite helpful to national parliaments in shaping them as modern legislatures equipped with up-to-date information.

Bangladesh requests IPU's involvement in the ongoing International Year for the Culture of Peace and seeks its support during the upcoming International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. We believe that IPU can play a major role in establishing world peace, human rights and good governance, since legislators in every country of the world can use their respective law-making processes in achieving all these goals. On the

issue of peace, I wish to quote Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh:

> "There is one value, one ideal and one dream common to all of us, and that is peace. We cherish peace with great affection. We consider peace to be of crucial importance all over the world. We see peace as a fundamental human right. And we are committed to attain, sustain, promote and strengthen peace at all cost."

Finally, Bangladesh welcomes the vision of the Secretary-General in looking forward to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and firmly believes that this bond will provide something remarkable for humankind at the dawn of this new millennium. We have therefore become a sponsor of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, introduced by the representative of India. Through this endeavour, we hope that the voice of people around the globe will be heard more frequently and clearly.

Mr. Ferguson (Australia): As one of two parliamentary advisers to the Australian delegation to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, I am pleased to participate in this debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Australia keenly supports efforts by the United Nations, the IPU and Member States to strengthen the links between the two organizations. In particular, we support the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of India, which asks that we look at ways in which the United Nations and IPU can develop a new, formalized relationship that reflects the special nature of the IPU and the contribution that both bodies can make to each other's work.

With a membership drawn from parliaments and national assemblies of over 140 countries, as well as 38 international organizations that have observer status, the IPU provides a unique forum for discussion and exchange on a broad range of topics, from international peace and security to the promotion of human rights and the environment.

Through its conferences and reports, the IPU has the potential to offer the United Nations and other bodies different perspectives — legislators' perspectives — from around the globe on issues affecting the international community. Often these perspectives will accord with the views of the Government of the day, but they will also reflect other political interests and concerns, including those of community groups, non-governmental organizations, business and the trade unions. A legislator's perspective, like that of the private sector or civil society more broadly, is invaluable to deliberations and decision-making at the intergovernmental level.

Australia sees scope for increased coordination of the United Nations and the IPU activities. Under a more formalized relationship, it may be possible for the IPU to structure its conferences and work agendas to link into areas of United Nations discussion, for example in studying the impact of globalization on employment and labour standards, or perhaps on developing strategies to fight HIV/AIDS.

We note that the IPU has an effective committee structure that could ably assist the United Nations deliberations through its inquiries and reports. There may be scope for the IPU to submit reports to particular committees of the United Nations General Assembly for further consideration.

One of the continuing challenges facing the United Nations, and indeed its Member States, is how to sustain support for the goals and objectives of the international system among national legislatures and lawmakers. If anything, this challenge is becoming harder, not easier, as Governments and peoples work to address the powerful effects of economic and social globalization.

In the same way that the IPU can provide input into the deliberations of the United Nations, it can also provide a platform for increasing parliamentary understanding of and support for the United Nations work. Importantly, the IPU, through its members, can challenge some of the common — but often deeply entrenched — misconceptions about the United Nations, as well as prompt closer parliamentary scrutiny of the benefits and obligations of participation in the United Nations system.

The United Nations future depends very much on its ability to secure the continued commitment of Member States to the United Nations system. In small part, this consolidation must start with building more effective partnerships with organizations such as the IPU and its members, which would help to find new areas for cooperation.

Mr. Al-Humaimidi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express our delegation's gratitude for the introduction of the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union" during the past year. Just a few months ago, from 30 August to 1 September 2000, the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, convened in this same Hall, just before the special session of the General Assembly known as the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations.

The holding of this Conference was an important landmark in the cooperation between the United Nations, as an international body that reflects the aspirations and concerns of States, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which represents the concerns and hopes of the peoples of the world. This Conference underlined the importance of the relationship between these two organizations. It emphasized the need for the United Nations to take into account the opinions, proposals and decisions of the IPU, since the Union represents and reflects the opinions of parliaments, which in turn represent the opinions of peoples. The word "peoples" is mentioned at the beginning of the United Nations Charter: "We the peoples of the United Nations".

The United Nations needs to hear, more than ever before, the views of the peoples, in view of the great international imbalances and the efforts of the United States to prevent United Nations bodies from making decisions that do not serve its egotistical interests. Efforts by IPU to make the voice of the peoples heard in the United Nations adds a democratic dimension to the international decision-making process and ensures the rule of law. The conclusion of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU has continued to give great interest to the international activities that strengthen those of the United Nations, particularly in the fields of peacekeeping, economic and social development, international law and human rights.

At this stage, I would like to highlight the important contribution made by the IPU Conference at its one hundred fourth session. The resolution adopted there stressed the increased attention given by the Union to the problems that people face owing to sanctions imposed by the Security Council. The principles contained in the resolution are considered guidelines for such sanctions, and the United Nations should take them into account because they reflect the opinions of the representatives of the peoples of the world.

The last resolution stressed that economic sanctions should be avoided and that if they are imposed their objectives must be defined precisely and must have a time limit. Furthermore, global economic sanctions should not be imposed because they harm too many innocent people. The resolution also stressed the need for sanctions to include exceptions for humanitarian purposes.

With regard to the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, the IPU's resolution included a clear paragraph to the effect that the Security Council should remove all global sanctions, including those imposed on Iraq, and that there should be a re-evaluation of the whole system of sanctions, including those now in force, in light of the above-mentioned principles. This no doubt reflects the will of the people of the world to put an end to the disastrous effects of comprehensive sanctions on peoples and to ensure that the Security Council recognizes that sanctions are responsible for the suffering of peoples. Therefore the Council is called upon to heed the Union's appeal to lift the global sanctions imposed on Iraq if it is to comply with the mandate entrusted to it by Member States. We also call upon the Union to pursue the application of its resolution so that the Security Council renounces recourse to sanctions as an economic and political means of depriving peoples of their fundamental rights.

We reiterate once again that it is necessary to develop detailed relations between the IPU and the United Nations to cover all United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, with a view to strengthening cooperation and partnership between the two organizations. On the basis of this principle, Iraq has become a sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.20.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): There is no task more urgent and more important than the democratization of international relations. Without it, efforts for peace, development and cooperation would be futile. The United Nations has the fundamental responsibility to attain that objective.

The parliamentarians of the entire world recently reaffirmed at the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments their commitment to the United Nations and its purposes and principles. The final

Declaration confirmed the need for a greater contribution by the parliamentarians to international relations and in particular to the work of the United Nations.

That conference, held as an integral part of the preparatory process for the Millennium Summit and Assembly, under resolution 54/12 of 27 October 1999, was of special importance in highlighting the scope and the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and also to show the potential for a greater contribution by parliamentarians the world over, through the IPU, to the work of the United Nations in the years to come.

The Cuban delegation welcomes and supports closer cooperation between the two organizations and considers that Member States and the parliamentarians of the world should broaden their relations in a more productive way. The opening, in March 1998, of the IPU Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York has facilitated and greatly contributed to this. The Secretary-General, in his report (A/55/409), "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", dated 18 October 2000, expresses his hope that in the future there will be greater and closer cooperation between the two organizations.

However, the position taken by the host country of the United Nations regarding the granting of visas for the participation of certain representatives of national parliaments at the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, unfortunately reflected a serious lack of commitment to these objectives. Cuba's participation was obstructed by the arbitrary and discriminatory decision of the authorities of the host country, which denied a visa to the President of the National Assembly of People's Power, Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, a situation that left the Inter-Parliamentary Union with no alternative but to accept as a fait accompli a violation of one of its fundamental principles.

The United States authorities are obliged to honour their commitments as host of the Headquarters of the United Nations and to provide all facilities for events directly related to it. It is regrettable that, with this behaviour, the authorities of the host country have joined the United States Congress's boycott of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Thus far there has been strict respect for the fundamental principle of the Inter-Parliamentary Union that it can only meet if all its members and observers have been invited, and if its representatives have been assured that they will receive the necessary visas to participate. That principle is fully in force and cannot be disregarded. Cuba completely supports this founding principle of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which makes it a universal international organization, and reaffirms the need for its complete observance.

The Cuban delegation thanks all the participants in the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, and the IPU, for their energetic rejection of the arbitrary and discriminatory decision of the authorities of the host country of the United Nations to deny visas to representatives of certain national parliaments.

Lastly, the Cuban delegation wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate the invitation extended by the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba to all the members and observers of the Inter-Parliamentary Union — without exception, on the basis of the principle I have set out — to participate in its 105th Conference, which will be held in Havana from 1 to 7 April 2001.

Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea): In facing a myriad of challenges, democracy and the rule of law are the most fundamental principles to be upheld, as was agreed in both the Declaration of the Millennium Summit and "The parliamentary vision of international cooperation". Their importance lies in the fact that the promotion of democratic institutions and the process of representation are the backbone of the success in meeting these challenges. In this regard, my delegation highly appreciates the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for its contribution not only to the promotion of democratic principles in individual States, but also to supporting and advancing daunting tasks on every important agenda of a global scale, such as international peace and security, economic and social development, international law, human rights and gender issues. My delegation also commends the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to set the priorities among the outstanding tasks and to coordinate the work between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Millennium Summit elaborated many of the challenges and tasks facing the international

community, which will only meet with success through the broad support of peoples and their representatives. My delegation is of the view that the United Nations would be better able to promote most of its agenda through a cooperative relationship with the IPU.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has been working closely with its National Assembly to keep its commitments to the work of the United Nations in all aspects, including our continued support for peacekeeping operations, particularly in East Timor.

The Republic of Korea has lent its full support to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union since this issue was included as an agenda item at the plenary of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We believe that close coordination between the United Nations and the IPU is essential, among others things, to promoting peace and security around the world and resolving problems of underdevelopment by getting their representatives directly involved in those global agendas.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has seen a milestone year in 2000. We were especially pleased to see the successful conclusion of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, indicating great potential for a positive future relationship between the United Nations and the IPU.

We gladly note that the Conference of Presiding Officers, held in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly, confirmed the guiding principles needed to meet the challenges ahead of us and stressed the need for increased parliamentary inputs to the work of the United Nations. We believe that this Conference significantly contributed to the overall millennium proceedings. My delegation noted with satisfaction that the "Parliamentary vision of international cooperation", adopted at the Conference, provided us with a perspective on the global agenda that is in keeping with the Millennium Declaration.

Based on this common perspective, my delegation believes that the United Nations and the IPU can rejoice in the ample opportunity they have to cultivate productive and substantive relations, going beyond declarations. In this regard, such pragmatic programmes as the one set up between the IPU and the United Nations Development Fund, aimed at assisting efforts in many countries to develop democratic institutions, should be encouraged. We request the Secretary-General to further explore areas where practical programmes between the United Nations and the IPU can take root.

The IPU has successfully supported the promotion of new norms in such areas as disarmament, economic and social development, human rights and international humanitarian law, the environment and gender issues. However, the IPU can play a more crucial role in establishing new international regimes by encouraging parliaments of individual States to ratify the appropriate conventions and treaties worked out within the framework of the United Nations system and to appropriate funds necessary for implementing related programmes and commitments.

We note with satisfaction the continuous expansion of the mutual relations between the United Nations and the IPU since the Cooperation Agreement in 1996. Let me also take this opportunity to draw attention to the commendable efforts of the IPU liaison office here in New York, particularly for their contribution to the millennium events.

Following up on the successful conclusion of the Millennium Summit, we are now faced with the all-important task of how to best translate its outcomes into reality. My Government has co-sponsored the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the belief that a stronger relationship between the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs and the IPU will indeed contribute to achieving our common goals. My appreciation also goes to the Indian delegation for its introduction of the draft resolution.

In conclusion, allow me to renew the commitment of the Republic of Korea to furthering the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU and to the cause of bringing our work at the United Nations ever closer to the people.

Mr. Vassallo (Malta): Ten weeks ago this Hall was the venue of a very special occasion in the form of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Parliamentarians of the world, whose legitimacy to speak on behalf of their constituents runs parallel to that which we as representatives of Governments claim, met here on the eve of the Millennium Summit.

For a few days we entered this Chamber only to find our seats occupied by individuals whose faces,

though familiar, rarely, if ever, grace this Hall; faces that we associate with our local political scenes and with exchanges of a rather more acrimonious nature than we are used to here at the United Nations.

Our parliamentary presiding officers and members of parliament converged on this building to express their views on the concepts that were soon afterwards captured in the Millennium Declaration. Express their views they did, and for this we are grateful.

But the Conference of Presiding Officers served another purpose in the manner in which it succeeded in bringing a number of concepts to the fore. First is the link between what we do here and what parliamentarians, in similar settings, are called upon to do at home. One should avoid suggesting that either the United Nations or a national parliament is more important than the other in addressing international challenges. To do so would be akin to debating whether a national government is more effective than a local government in improving the lives of ordinary people. The truth is that neither of them can deliver satisfactory results without the cooperation and support of the other.

Diplomats can gain the impression that the prescriptions devised in these halls could in effect provide solutions domestically if only national parliaments would see the big picture and be less engrossed in local perspectives.

On the other hand, local parliamentarians often bemoan the solutions originating in international forums for their lack of connectedness with the situation on the ground and for the manner in which they sometimes conflict with the perceived national interests.

My delegation believes that the IPU's Conference of Presiding Officers served to highlight the fact that our agendas here at the United Nations and in our national legislatures are linked in many spheres and that, more importantly, solutions to many of the challenges we face can be achieved only through better mutual understanding and cooperation between these two representative bodies. There is nevertheless a division of labour to be respected, one which is based on the differing natures of these institutions.

The Conference of Presiding Officers served yet another purpose by drawing attention to the working methods of our national parliaments and contrasting them with our own methods here at the United Nations. Perhaps there are lessons to be learned from them — and I refer here not only to the enviable punctuality which the Conference of Presiding Officers succeeded in exhibiting during its proceedings. National legislatures are, like the United Nations, assemblies of representatives, with onerous responsibilities towards large numbers of people who often rely on them to guarantee their rights, their freedoms and their livelihoods. Nevertheless, the differences between the practices of this Organization and those of our national parliaments are rather pronounced. While parliamentarians are doubtless as capable as we are of inflicting endless rhetoric upon each other, legislative assemblies enjoy a greater sense of urgency in much of their work and a greater urge to cut to the chase and reach conclusions. Whereas in drafting statements many of us ask ourselves what a speech on a particular issue from our country must include, parliamentarians seem to ask themselves what new angle or argument they can add to a debate, even if they may do so for their own particular reasons.

The stock-in-trade of parliaments includes legislative measures, but, as at the United Nations, it also includes resolutions. Legislatures resolve to support many ideas and initiatives, but rarely do they do so in an identical fashion year after year. Clearly, the United Nations is faced with many critical political situations and concerns that need to be reiterated at every session of the General Assembly. But can that really be said of all the draft resolutions we bring before this body every 12 months? Why is it that national parliaments feel satisfied to pass non-binding resolutions once, while the United Nations feels that it is important to repeat itself every year to make the point? Certainly there is scope for the United Nations as a whole, and its constituent Members, to take a look at the manner in which we utilize our indispensable Organization and to be prepared, perhaps, to take a leaf out of the book of our national legislatures.

Apart from providing an opportunity for the United Nations to engage in an exercise in self-examination, the Inter-Parliamentary Union is involved in numerous worthy initiatives. The Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, which this delegation warmly welcomes, clearly illustrates that many of these initiatives coincide with issues that we are also seized

with at the United Nations. The added value of the involvement of the IPU in these issues lies in the special contribution that it can make as a result of its unique nature and membership.

While within the United Nations Malta has continuously supported initiatives aimed at peace and mutual development of economic interests in the Mediterranean, it was the IPU that provided the first platform for an exclusively Mediterranean political dialogue. Malta was among the countries that in the early 1990s proposed having a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) process within the IPU. Three Inter-Parliamentary Conferences on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean have since taken place, the last one in Marseilles in April of this year. In the words of Foreign Minister Mr. Joseph Borg,

> "the consistent exchange of views over the years within the CSCM have given us a clear picture of those features in the political, economic and socio-cultural fields that provide for common understanding among the littoral States".

The success of the Conferences encouraged us to propose the institutionalization of the process that we are now endeavouring to transform into a parliamentary assembly of Mediterranean States. The one hundred and fourth IPU Conference, held in Jakarta last month, was unanimous in upholding the eventual establishment of such a parliamentary assembly. We consider the establishment of a parliamentary assembly of Mediterranean States within the IPU to be a qualitative leap forward, providing the region with a unique political setting, bringing together all the States of the Mediterranean on an equal footing in a regional forum of their own.

While the United Nations continues to play its role in seeking to resolve several old and sometimes disheartening questions in the Mediterranean basin, cooperation with organizations like the IPU and their specialized bodies can provide the United Nations with invaluable benefits that complement its own endeavours.

My delegation is highly supportive of the many other IPU initiatives referred to in the statement delivered by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union, with which Malta has aligned itself. Malta continues to support the further enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU and is therefore once again a sponsor of the draft resolution we are to adopt shortly.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): Brazil is very pleased to participate in this debate. For more than a century now, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been an incremental force in promoting cooperation and understanding among parliamentarians of different nations. Like parliaments, the United Nations is about democracy and participation, negotiation and representation.

In carrying out the mandate it has been entrusted with by international society, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has clearly demonstrated over the years that it shares the goals the United Nations has set out to accomplish. Ranging over a wide set of issues — from economic and social development to peace, the eradication of poverty, security and human rights — the IPU helps to intensify the dialogue among societies and nations and is thus a major contributor to the objectives of the United Nations. Cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations is natural and necessary. The creation of a more stable and more just international order is our common endeavour.

The participation of parliamentary observers in the General Assembly, for example, is a long-standing Brazilian practice that offers an opportunity for our Congressmen to interact with their colleagues from across the globe, as do other IPU meetings. This is a natural consequence of the close interaction between domestic and international affairs. To give but two examples in the economic field, Brazil's international trade profile and the integration of the economies of Latin America — especially the consolidation of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) — are in fact matters of daily attention on the part of Brazilian Congressmen. In the political and legal field, Brazil's international commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation and our participation in the negotiations that led to the creation of the International Criminal Court are also matters of lively interest to the Brazilian Congress.

We were very pleased at the outcome of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which was held in the United Nations from 30 August to 1 September 2000. The Declaration entitled "The Parliamentary vision of international cooperation on the eve of the third millennium" has

been an extremely valuable contribution to the work of the Millennium Assembly.

Brazil is honoured to be among the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/55/L.20) before the Assembly today. We are convinced that the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will become even more effective instruments for the advancement and common development of the international community in coming years if cooperation between them is further expanded and enhanced.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish first of all to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his valuable report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (A/55/409). The Egyptian delegation attaches particular importance to the debate on this important agenda item, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

Just as the United Nations is made up of representatives of the world's States and Governments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union is composed of representatives of the world's peoples. It is therefore a special counterpart of the United Nations and can certainly make a significant contribution to the Organization's work at the international level.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance that Egypt attaches to the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and to strengthening the relationship between the IPU and the United Nations: the IPU is an important forum for expressing the will of representatives of the world's peoples, along with their hopes, their concerns and their priorities.

The Egyptian delegation believes that strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in line with existing rules and resolutions would respond to the desire expressed by heads of State or Government at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. The Millennium Declaration recommended the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU in various fields, including peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights and democracy and other issues vital to the international community.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU was reflected in the convening of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which was held in the United Nations from 30 August to 1 September 2000 at the margins of the Millennium Summit. The Conference Declaration outlined the main challenges facing the world at the outset of the new millennium, and indicated how parliamentarians intend to meet those challenges in keeping with the interests of the international community. The Declaration reaffirmed the commitment of the IPU to the noble principles that, we hope, will guide the international community: the rule of law, respect for human rights and democracy.

The IPU has a leading role to play in expressing the will of the world's peoples. That is why its decisions and resolutions must be taken into consideration and why the international community must heed the voice of peoples that express themselves through the Union.

The Egyptian delegation wishes to draw attention to an important resolution adopted by an overwhelming majority of members of the IPU at their Jakarta conference last October. It related to the need to end tension in the Middle East, to protect Palestinian civilians in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to pursue the peace process in accordance with relevant resolutions of the United Nations. That IPU resolution condemned Israel for its acts of provocation, Israel's failure to respect the sanctity of Islam's holy places has fuelled violence in the occupied territories. As a result, thousands of unarmed Palestinian civilians have been wounded and dozens killed, including many children. The resolution called upon Israel to put an end to its military operations in the occupied Palestinian territories and to comply with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The resolution further reaffirmed the applicability of that Convention to all the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. That resolution was supported by some 1,000 members of the world's parliaments and once again showed that the Inter-Parliamentary Union is the voice of the world's people and is the enemy of injustice and occupation.

I wish in conclusion to state our support for the draft resolution before the Assembly (A/55/L.20) on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We invite delegations to adopt it without a vote so that we can all affirm the importance we attach to the strengthening of that cooperation and

so that we can express our sincere will to strengthen it at every level.

Mr. Tarabrin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which took place on the eve of the Millennium Summit, was a convincing demonstration of the powerful potential of parliamentary diplomacy. As the President of the Russian State Duma and member of the preparatory committee for that Conference, Mr. Guennadi N. Seleznev, said in his statement at the Conference, parliamentary diplomacy is becoming an important element of international dialogue.

Through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), national legislatures are ready to play a more active role in solving the multifaceted problems facing mankind in the new century. It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/409) that the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union today embraces a broad range of issues that increasingly coincide with the key areas of the work of the United Nations. These include peace and security, economic and social development, international law, human rights, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, improving the status of women and dialogue among civilizations.

We are justifiably proud of the participation by Russian parliamentarians in the varied activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, especially in its United Nations segment. The contribution of Russians is especially notable in such important areas of the IPU's work as the campaign for world and regional peace and security, especially in the Mediterranean; the partnership between men and women in politics; and meetings of women members of parliaments.

Moreover, participation in the work of the IPU is an important way for the Russian Parliament to learn about the experience of international parliamentarianism, the building of democratic institutions and international politics. Extensive links among parliaments and participation by members of parliaments in international forums and negotiations have had a positive influence on the quality of the work of the State Duma and the Federation Council relating to the ratification of international treaties. In recent years, our legislature has ratified more than 250 international agreements, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the START II treaty between Russia and the United States.

The Government of the Russian Federation welcomes and encourages a constructive and interested approach on the part of our members of parliament towards international activities. It is no coincidence that, in addition to President Vladimir Putin, the official delegation of the Russian Federation to the Millennium Summit included the first Deputy Speaker of the State Duma, L. K. Sliska, and the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the State Duma, D. O. Rogozin.

The goal of investing international cooperation with a parliamentary dimension, proclaimed in the final declaration of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, deserves full support. The further goal-oriented involvement in the work of the United Nations of such a unique non-governmental organization as the IPU will inevitably promote the further democratization of international relations. This is a reflection of the parliamentary aspect of the current trend towards enhancing the role of civil society in all areas of contemporary life, including through cooperation with the United Nations system. The voice of the people, and, above all, the voice of their elected representatives, must be heard within these walls and thus promote the adoption by the Governments represented here of correct and wise decisions. Russia sees in the extension of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU not only an important support mechanism for resolving difficult international problems, but a means of strengthening the United Nations itself and enhancing the authority of our Organization through the contribution that the members of legislative assemblies can make to its work.

In the final declaration — "The parliamentary vision for international cooperation at the dawn of the third millennium" — the presiding officers of national parliaments unambiguously stated that the role of the United Nations is more important than ever before and must serve as a cornerstone for broad and effective global cooperation. That is our common goal, and we are convinced that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will promote its attainment. This is also our assessment of the draft resolution that was introduced by the representative of India. We would like to co-sponsor the draft resolution and hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.20, as orally revised.

Before taking action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.20: Algeria, the Bahamas, Bhutan, Colombia, France, Georgia, Guinea, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Norway, the Russian Federation, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago and Zambia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.20, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/55/L.20, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 55/19).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Schacham (Israel): The representative of Egypt has unfortunately used this debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to voice a political attack against my country. It is my understanding that the Jakarta resolution regarding the Middle East does not condemn Israel, and appeals to both sides to work to end the violence and to return to negotiations. Only a fortnight ago, Egypt graciously hosted the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, at which an Israeli-Palestinian agreement was reached on ending the violence — an agreement which we are trying to implement today. That summit recognized that neither side in this conflict has a monopoly on the status of victim and that both sides must act to bring about an end to violence. Indeed, President Mubarak of Egypt spoke there of the need for both sides to return to the peace process and to end the cycle of violence. In this light, the words of the representative of Egypt, which seek to misrepresent Israel, are unreflective, at the very best, of Egypt's pronounced and greatly appreciated role as a supporter and facilitator of the Middle East peace process. Such political manipulation of the IPU Jakarta resolution only undermines the IPU, an organization which all sides in our region respect.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt): Once more, the representative of Israel is attempting to alter and distort the facts pertaining to the escalation of violence in Palestine and trying to avoid pinning the situation on anybody. The representative of Israel is ignoring the well-documented facts that the violence was a consequence of, and a reaction to, the provocative visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Daily atrocities and gross violations of human rights were then committed on an almost hourly basis by the Israeli occupying forces, which were armed to the teeth, against Palestinian civilians, women and men, old and young, including schoolboys and schoolgirls under the age of 10.

It is indeed puzzling and mind-boggling that in this regard Israel ignores its responsibility in this regard — a responsibility that is well-known and well documented. The Security Council, the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-Parliamentary Conference — to name just a few bodies — without exception, pointed the finger at Israeli responsibility in this regard.

Could it be possible that the international community, as represented in those different forums, is wrong, and that Israel is right? Israel can fool some of the people some of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but it cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

Finally, it is important that Israel work with its Palestinian partners towards establishing peace — durable and everlasting peace, based on the principle of land for peace, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and full respect for and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including the right to establish their own State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Schacham (Israel): It is extremely disingenuous of the Egyptian representative to couch the current violence in religious terms and to attempt to portray Israeli actions as a threat to the sanctity and integrity of other religious faiths. The current violence is wholly unrelated to any religious dispute, and any attempts to create such a connection is a fabrication deliberately aimed at widening the conflict, sharpening the religious divide and creating inter-religious tensions where there are none.

The most blatant attempt to foment religious strife is the recent action of Palestinian gunmen, who have consciously taken up positions in or near Christian institutions in the village of Beit Jala, from where they direct fire at the Jewish residents of the nearby Gilo neighbourhood of Jerusalem. This appalling use of a religious site is intended not only to kill Jewish targets but also to draw Israeli return fire, which will damage the Christian shrines and inflame the Christian world against the Jewish people.

The unrelenting focus, mentioned again by the Egyptian representative, on the alleged provocation of Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount stems from a similar motivation. The visit of an Israeli politician to Judaism's most holy site is repeatedly portrayed as though it must obviously be an affront to Muslims, in a further attempt to broaden the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis and to recast it as one between Judaism and Islam.

Unfortunately, this has not been the only example. The oft-repeated mantra from various Arab spokesmen protesting the Judaization of Jerusalem could be considered historically ludicrous were it not so blatantly malicious, blasphemous and dehumanizing to those of the Jewish faith. Jerusalem needs no Judaization. The city is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish bible, is a central theme of Jewish ritual and has been the site of continuous Jewish presence for 3,000 years.

Further examples abound. Joseph's Tomb, in Nablus, after being temporarily evacuated under an agreement with the Palestinian police, was brutally destroyed, and Jewish ritual objects were burned and desecrated. The site was subsequently rededicated as a Muslim mosque. The ancient Shalom Al Israel synagogue, near Jericho, was the target of Palestinian arson. Rachel's Tomb, near Bethlehem, has repeatedly been subjected to a hail of Palestinian machine-gun fire.

These are the sort of religious atrocities that would have caused worldwide religious outcry and denunciation had they been perpetrated against any other religion or in any other place in the world. The forced closure of Judaism's most revered site of prayer, the Western Wall, on the eve of the Rosh Hashanah high holiday, as a result of the stoning of Jewish worshipers by Palestinians, is tantamount to the evacuation of St. Peter's Square on Christmas or the shutdown of Mecca's Kaaba during the height of th hajj.

And yet the Palestinians continue to maintain th the greatest travesty to have occurred, the grosse violation of a sacred site and the most unforgivab provocation was that brief visit by an Israeli politici to his people's most holy site.

I must also respond to statements made by th Egyptian representative regarding the highly publiciz deaths of Palestinian children over the course of th recent violence. It seems that not only does th Palestinian Authority deplorably seek to capitalize these deaths to win international sympathy and advan its political objectives, but it seems to be deliberate obscuring attempts to ask one significant questio What were these children doing in the line of fire in th first place?

It is sickening to hear various Arab spokesm stressing how many children have been killed by Isra as if to say that each child lost is actually a victory f the struggle. It need hardly be mentioned that su activity is in blatant violation of international laws a accepted norms of conduct. This is not only an affro to Israel but an affront to ethical humanity as a who and should roundly be condemned by the internation community.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It woul seem that I was not understood because I spoke English. But I think I was clear. The representative Israel, as usual, again is distorting facts and gettin things mixed up. He speaks of religion and the accuses others of speaking of it. That is nothing new.

The Egyptian delegation recalled two paragraph of the resolution that was adopted by the la Conference of Presiding Officers of Nation Parliaments by a majority of 1,000 parliamentarian from all over the world, representing all cultures. Th two paragraphs in question explicitly recalled the nam of the Israeli official just referred to by th representative of Israel, and we all recognize that th cause of the violence was the provocative visit made Al-Haram Al-Sharif. This was recognized by th international community and is not something bein said by Egypt.

It is unfortunate that the representative of Isra did not read the resolution of the Inter-Parliamentar

Union. He has mixed things up and distorted the facts. Of course, these are counter-truths, as I said in English.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 26.

Agenda item 8

Organization of work of the fifty-fifth session

The President: I should like to consult the representatives regarding an extension for the work of the Fourth Committee.

Members will recall that at its ninth plenary meeting on 11 September 2000 the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, the Fourth Committee, would complete its work by Thursday, 9 November 2000. However, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee that the Committee will not be able to finish its work by Thursday, 9 November 2000.

It is my understanding that the Committee would need to meet until Friday, 17 November 2000. May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Committee until Friday, 17 November 2000?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.